



2002

France's radioactive waste management program

Low-level radioactive waste

From 1969 to 1994, the Manche Disposal Facility was the country's first short-lived, low-, and medium-level radioactive waste disposal site. In 1992, the Centre de l'Aube Disposal Facility began accepting low-level radioactive waste produced by power plants, research, industry, and medicine. Centre de l'Aube is currently France's site for low-level radioactive waste disposal.

within France; trucks carry the materials over short distances. Five ships transport the material intercoastally. Spent nuclear fuel arrives at La Hague by train in specially designed rail cars, which are admitted without restriction into normal railway traffic.

Deep geologic disposal plans

A research program to study high-level radioactive waste disposal began with legislation enacted in 1991. The French Waste Management Research Act of December 1991 authorized 15-year studies of three management options for high-level or long half-life radioactive waste. They included separation and/or transmutation, long-term storage, and geologic disposal. One site under consideration for deep geologic disposal in clay is currently being studied. The French are also searching for a granite site to research.

2001

Spent nuclear fuel and high-level radioactive waste

Spent nuclear fuel is kept for one year on site in specially constructed storage pools. Following storage, spent nuclear fuel is transported to the La Hague and Marcoule reprocessing plants and stored in pools for two to three years.

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Reprocessing spent nuclear fuel

France reprocesses its own spent nuclear fuel. Belgium, Germany, the Netherlands, Switzerland, and Japan also send, or have sent in the past, spent nuclear fuel to France for reprocessing. High-level reprocessed waste is vitrified (solidified) and stored at La Hague for several decades, where it awaits final geologic disposal.



U.S. Department of Energy
Office of Civilian Radioactive Waste Management

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1998

Transporting radioactive waste

France has more than 30 years of experience transporting radioactive waste. Spent nuclear fuel and high-level radioactive waste are shipped by rail



